

CIVIL WAR PENSIONS

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By

PAUL W. DAVIS

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APPROVED:

T. H. Reynolds

In Charge of Thesis

T. H. Reynolds

Head of Department of History

D. C. M. Tulloh

Dean of Graduate School

PREFACE

It is not the purpose of this thesis to assume a conclusion of fraud in the Civil War Pension System, but merely to find out what the conditions were and bring them out.

This study is divided into four parts: 1. A survey of pensions up to Harrison's administration; 2. The Pension Bureau under Tanner and Raum; 3. Individual typical cases of fraud; 4. Conclusion.

These materials were gathered from the library at the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, and the library at Oklahoma University.

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CIVIL WAR PENSIONS

CHAPTER I

PENSIONS UP TO HARRISON'S ADMINISTRATION

For many years pensions have occupied a place in our newspapers and conversation, second only to the topic of the gold standard. Our scene shifts from 1933 to 1861. In order to make the study of Civil War pensions clear, it is necessary to go back into the history of pensions. The word itself is a derivation of the Latin word "pensio" and according to the United States Senate, we find a pension to be a "periodic allowance of money to a person, in the nature partly of a gratuity and partly of payment for past services rendered."¹ In Messages and Papers of the President, we find a pension is an allowance of money paid in fixed amounts at certain intervals by a government to such persons as have rendered some valuable public service.² Thus we find both definitions agreeing that some service must have been rendered.

In studying the English origin of pensions, one notices that it was the "good Queen Bess" who first instigated the caring for the poor, sick, and maimed soldiers. She compelled definite national recognition and action

¹Senate Document No. 131, 72 Cong., 1 sess., p. 25.

²James D. Richardson, Messages and Papers of the Presidents, X, 308-309.

in the English Parliament in the session of 1592-1593. Consequently, the first statute for the relief of English soldiers was passed and duly recorded by historians. A new statute was enacted in 1601 which quaintly reads, "Necessairie reliefe of souldiers and mariners". These laws were amplified by nearly all of the later kings.³

The custom of paying military pensions was established in England at the same relative time as the colonization of America. Therefore, it was the natural outcome that the English system would be transplanted to the colonies. The English colonies in America did provide, "standing relief for their soldiers injured in war."⁴

The first legislation on American soil was passed by the Continental Congress, August 26, 1776. It promised to pay pensions to soldiers and sailors who had been and might be disabled in the Revolutionary War, and that all officers who should continue faithful in the service until the successful termination of the war, should receive one half of their regular pay for seven years after peace had been established. Later the widows and orphans of those who had died in the defense of their country were cared for in an amendment to this act. In 1789 and again

³Senate Document No. 131, 72 Cong., 1 sess., p. 26.

⁴Ibid.

in 1808 the pension obligations of the various states were assumed by the United States.⁵ These acts fulfilled the promises made by the Continental Congress of 1776. Heretofore pensions were granted because of disability; but in 1818 an act was passed giving pensions to all those who were impoverished and had served at least nine months in the Revolutionary army. This liberal law gave precedence for wholesale fraud in the pension system. The number who applied outnumbered those who could have survived Washington's army. The estimate for the first year was just one eleventh of the amount actually required, the second year one seventeenth.⁶ Since this time pension acts of all kinds, both good and bad, have been passed by Congress. Out of these acts, much good has been accomplished; but also many frauds have been perpetuated against the government.

In a study of the administration of the pension laws, it appears that the laws from 1799 to 1832 were administered by a Commission composed of the Secretary of the Navy, the Secretary of War, and the Secretary of the Treasury. The first Commission of Pensions was appointed temporarily in 1833, being under the direction of the Secretary of War. In 1849 legislation was enacted making the Commissioner of Pensions a permanent office. The Department of Interior was formed and the pension system was in-

⁵Richardson, op. cit., pp. 308-309.

⁶Ibid.

serted as a bureau in it. The administration of pensions has been in the hands of this bureau until 1930.⁷

Congress in calling for volunteers to fight in preservation of the Union, tempted the able bodied men by the inducement of bounties and liberal pensions. The redeeming of this promise has been costly. The first year after Appomattox cost the United States \$15,000,000 in paying disabled soldiers, their widows and orphans. The natural increase placed the bill at \$31,000,000 in 1874. Due to the death rate of veterans, the pension appropriation was decreased in 1878 to \$28,000,000.⁸ Through political influence of pension attorneys, who controlled the Grand Army of the Republic, there was passed in 1879 a new pension act giving full arrears to all entitled to pensions. Although President Hayes's judgment was against the bill, he was forced to sign because of undue influence. The Arrears of the Pension Act provided "that every pensioner was entitled to receive his annuity not from the date of the award, but from the date of mustering out."⁹

The lump sums thus offered, presented tempting prizes to the old soldiers and thousands of pension attorneys preying on the United States pensioning system. The old soldiers searched their bones and muscles for ills that

⁷Senate Document No. 131, 72 Cong., 1 sess., p. 25.

⁸Annual Report of the Bureau of Pensions, June 30, 1930, p. 13.

⁹Frederic L. Paxson, Recent History of the United States, p. 97.

might be attributed to their active service during the War of the Rebellion. Two years saw the pension appropriation bill rebound for its natural decline of \$28,000,000 up to \$58,000,000.¹⁰ The Arrears of Pension Bill varied in individual cases from hundreds up to thousands of dollars. Commissioner Bently estimated the average amount at \$1,025 per person.¹¹

It was at this time, with the goal of thousands of dollars to look forward to that the Grand Army of the Republic increased its enrollment from 60,678 in 1880 to 427,981 in 1890.¹² Prior to 1879 the growth of pensions and the pension system had been a natural one without undue stimulus. Now we find a period of growth that is kept going by a powerful stimulus. People wanted money and it made no difference whether it was obtained legitimately or stolen from the government.

The forces favoring pension legislation were: First, the veteran soldiers; second, the Grand Army of the Republic; third, the Civil War sentiment and tradition that persisted in the north; fourth, the Washington claim's agents; fifth, the pension politicians; sixth, the relation of the pension question to the tariff.¹³

There were many and varied arguments used to convince the people of their obligations to the pensioners. "At

¹⁰Annual Report of the Bureau of Pensions, June 30, 1930, p. 13.

¹¹Senate Document No. 24, 45 Cong., 3 sess.

¹²Donald L. McMurry, "The Political Significance of the Pension Question, 1885-1897", Mississippi Valley Historical Review, IX, p. 20.

¹³Ibid.

the end of the war", so one version of the argument ran,
 the government had two kinds of creditors;
 the soldiers who had risked their lives,
 and the bond holders, who had risked merely
 their money.

Tables were produced comparing the amounts paid to bond holders with the amounts paid to pensioners to show that the soldiers had not received their dues.¹⁴

The veteran soldiers put in new claims by the thousands. The Grand Army of the Republic was utilized by the pension attorneys and claim agents to ferret new claims. It lobbied with all its political influence and the threat of old soldier votes for greater appropriations. The Grand Army of the Republic was in the hands of the Washington pension attorneys. Paxson says that to them the organization was not a patriotic order but a machine for making the pension appropriation greater so their profit would be proportionally increased.¹⁵

The relation of the pension question and the tariff is a very important one on legislation. The high tariff politicians in order to railroad their measures through, induced the pension leaders to indorse a high tariff. Their argument was couched in this manner. A high tariff would give a treasury surplus, which was needed to pay the large number of veterans.¹⁶

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Paxson, op. cit., p. 98.

¹⁶McMurry, op. cit., p. 24.

Through these influences the pension claimants in 1877 had over 40,000 cases on file that had not even been touched. They were receiving additional requests at the rate of five or six thousand a month. By the close of 1882, the Pension Bureau was conducting an enormous business. The new Commissioner, Mr. W. W. Dudley, had convinced Congress that an additional appropriation was necessary to keep up with the flood of applications. In August 1882, nearly \$2,000,000 was appropriated by Congress to cover the operating expenses of the Bureau.¹⁷

The presidential campaign of 1884 is significant. The Democrats were determined to offer a program of economy. In speaking of the pension roll, Mr. Hancock of Texas said,

We are now expending for pensions alone more than double as much annually as was necessarily expended by the general government from 1840 to 1850, and it is difficult to say where it is to stop when it is looked upon as a powerful lever by many members of the House to secure a succession to their seats upon this floor.¹⁸

The only important pension legislation in the 48th Congress was the raising of the attorney fees from \$10. to \$25.¹⁹ In explaining the cause of limiting the attorney fees, let us look into some cases in 1870.

In studying frauds there are two main classes--that of wholly fraudulent claims, and the claim attorneys de-

¹⁷John W. Oliver, Civil War Pensions, 1861-1885, p. 72.

¹⁸Cong. Record, 48 Cong., 2 sess., p. 487.

¹⁹United States Statutes at Large, XV, 99.

frauding the pensioner of his money. Of the latter class the corruption is infinite. In a special investigation made by Colonel Richard J. Dodge of the War Department, we find this statement in his report:

Their ramifications are infinite, from the petty advance fee of twenty-five cents to the complete fraudulent claims supported entirely by forgery and perjury and of every variety of shrewdness, money, knavery, power, and utter unscrupulousness may devise and execute when dealing with ignorance, confidence, and helplessness.²⁰

The claim attorney would employ unscrupulous persons who, armed with the lists of claimants to be paid, hung around the door of the disbursing office and seized in turn each pensioner as he came out with his money. One of the attorneys employed a person who at one time had been a special constable. It was his duty to arrest the kicking veteran, take him to the claim agents office, in rare cases to the police station, and although he had absolutely no authority, he would scare the veteran into giving up his money. This bogus constable went on from day to day outraging the rights of the pensioners and assisting in the most bareface robberies. If the man insisted that he owed nothing he was arrested and then rushed to the agents office. There he was forced to give up his money.

In two different cases it was found that he was held

²⁰Congressional Globe, 41 Cong., 2 sess., p. 1967.

while his pockets were rifled by another. In ten cases taken without selection, the average amount of money received by the agent as first payment of pensions was \$352.40 while the veteran received \$166.40.²¹ Something had to be done to remedy this situation, so a law was passed allowing only a \$10. fee for the claim agent. The fee was not enough graft for the pension attorneys, therefore we find the fee being raised from \$10. to \$25.²²

The two men who pushed it through were Commissioner Dudley and George E. Lemon. Mr. Lemon's actions were so notorious as to require a special investigation of the Pension Bureau. Oliver in "Civil War Pensions" says,

The testimony that was produced in the hearing before this committee reveals the tremendous power that was exerted by Washington claim agents, and by Mr. Lemon in particular. The influence of the latter seems almost incredible.

Of all the government officials who have been guilty of prostituting their offices to purely political purpose, none can show a more notorious record than that established by Colonel W. W. Dudley. During the three and one half years that he was Commissioner of Pensions, his one aim appears to have been to build up a great political machine. He realized more keenly than any of his predecessors, the enormous power that lay in the hands of the pensioners if only it could be effectively organized. To this end he

²¹Ibid.

²²U. S. Statutes at Large, XV, 99.

devoted all his personal interest as well as those of the promiscuous giving of pensions, for this he was unable to do. What he was primarily interested in, was that of managing the campaign so as to insure a Republican victory.²³

Dudley considered the possibilities of the old soldier vote of the greatest significance. In order that he might exploit the "possibilities" he had the pension bureau clerks prepare a statement showing all the soldiers enlisted in each regimental organization. The total of all enlistments was interesting. 2,069,391 had joined either the army or the navy, and of this number twenty-six per cent had applied for pensions. 297,566 dependents and relatives other than the actual soldiers had been granted pensions or had attempted to get them.²⁴

In the election of 1884, Mr. Dudley was very active. Five states were found to be strategic in the election and also in the pension bureau. Mr. Dudley, in order to gain votes, ordered the clerks in the bureau to reject no claims until after the election. The claims from the doubtful states were given preference in examination.²⁵ To help the Republican campaign from September until November 10, 1884, Mr. Dudley absented himself from his office and did not return; but he still drew his salary.

²³Ibid., p. 109.

²⁴Oliver, op. cit., p. 107.

²⁵House Report No. 2683, 48 Cong., 2 sess., III, 32-46.

He had the pension bureau employees come to his headquarters in Columbus, Ohio to use their influence in the campaign.²⁶ The New York Herald stated,

This will not do Mr. Arthur. The facts are notorious--as notorious as the dates of an almanac in a court of law. You know of Mr. Dudley's absence from Washington. You know the cause of his absence. You know what he has been doing in Ohio. You know of his impudent boast that you dare not interrupt him until he gets through. You know of his intended passage from Ohio into Indiana, to repeat the same dirty work there for Mr. Blaine. You know, too, that the "red tape" circumambient course on which you have sent the letter through the Interior Department will not bring it back to you 'till after the November election and that in the meantime, Commissioner Dudley will remain in Indiana perpetuating his villanies unless you take a prompter step to recall him or remove him.²⁷

Mr. Dudley was instrumental in turning many votes from the Democrats to the Republicans, through the influence of the Bureau. Commissioner Black in referring to Dudley's reign, condemned it.

At one time the Pension Bureau was all but avowedly a political machine, filled from border to border with uncompromising adherents of a single organization, who had for the claimant other tests than those of law, and who required in addition to service in the field, submission to and support of a party before pensions were granted . . . People of one faith filled every one of the great agencies. Examiners, trained in unscrupulous schools, traversed the land as recruiting sergeants for a party. Chiefs of division, assistants, clerks, messenger boys, watchmen, and laborers

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Oliver, op. cit., p. 110.

were all but entirely from one school. Veteran service could not secure continuance in office, and at the behest and demand of partisans beyond the office, old employees were cut adrift and zealous ruffians placed in their stead; leaves of absence were granted that the active men of the party might dominate over the election.²⁸

The act of 1878 limiting the attorney fee to \$10. led to serious abuses. It was found that claim agents would collect fees and never file the claims. The claimants were frequently required to pay the \$10. fee many times before the claim would be filed.²⁹

The new law allowing \$25. for claims helped to stop these abuses, for no part of the fee could be collected until the claim had been allowed and the first pension payment made.³⁰ Some abuses were minimized, but new ones arose in their place. Applicants were compelled to file a new contract and pay \$15. more after the claim was passed. Mr. Warner characterizes this act as:

Piracy in the middle ages on honest commerce was an honest calling compared to such a practice.³¹

Mr. Lemon was the attorney to receive most of the benefit from the act, for he was the one who proposed the amendment.³² This notorious attorney bought out the claims of Mr. N. W. Fitzgerald thereby securing \$40,000 of new claims. The next day the new increase in

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Congressional Record, 48 Cong., 1 sess., p. 2886.

³⁰U. S. Statute at Large, XV, 99.

³¹Congressional Record, 48 Cong., 2 sess., p. 487.

³²House Report No. 2683, 48 Cong., 2 sess., III, 60.

fees bill was passed. Mr. Fitzgerald tried to repurchase his claims. In refusing Mr. Tanner says,

You don't know what you are talking about.
Your business has not cost me only the \$8,000
I paid you; it has cost me \$50,000 to get the
bill through congress.³³

When passing the appropriation in 1888 a rider was inserted repealing the limitation imposed upon the payment of arrears to widows.³⁴ Commissioner Evans characterizes it as

a standing invitation to fraudulent claims
. . . and offers a premium on perjury and
false witnesses.³⁵

During the period between 1879 and 1888, the Grand Army of the Republic was especially active. Cleveland in 1887 vetoed the Dependents Pension Bill. We must commend Cleveland for his courageous stand in regard to private pension bills. He looked into the merits of these as much as his limited time would permit. Out of 1500 of these he vetoed 191. The Grand Army of the Republic condemned him severely for this. The sarcastic remarks he made concerning some of the most obvious cases were used to his detriment.³⁶

³³Oliver, op. cit., p. 101.

³⁴U. S. Statute at Large, XXII, 247, 248.

³⁵Ibid., p. 173.

³⁶McMurry, op. cit., pp. 28, 29.

CHAPTER II
TWO NOTORIOUS PENSION COMMISSIONERS
TANNER AND RAUM

Corporal James Tanner, one of the ringleaders of the Grand Army of the Republic, was instrumental in electing Harrison. He went about representing Cleveland as "an inhuman monster and Benjamin Harrison as an angel of mercy carrying a purse hanging mouth downward."¹

In an article in the Mississippi Valley Historical Review--The Political Significance of the Pension Question, 1885-1897--we find this significant statement about Harrison's election:

The credit for Cleveland's defeat is unquestionably due to the veterans. The new administration seemed clearly under obligations to do something for the old soldiers. The assurance of the platform, the statements of General Harrison, and the more lavish promises of campaign orators led them to expect both generous pension legislation and a liberal interpretation of the laws by the Bureau of Pensions.

Harrison went into office pledged to the policy of decreasing the surplus of the treasury by opening the pension roll. His platform called emphatically for higher pensions.

In the presence of an overflowing treasury, it would be a public scandal to do less for those whose valorous services preserved the

¹McMurry, op. cit., pp. 28, 29.

government . . . The legislation of Congress should conform to the pledge made by a loyal people, and be so enlarged and extended as to provide against the probability that any man who honorably wore the Federal uniform shall become an inmate of an almshouse or dependent upon private charity.²

The eyes of the old soldiers, the pension attorneys, and unprincipal vultures who preyed upon the pension system, were eagerly turned to Harrison. Many names were considered by him, and out of the "grab-bag" came the name of Corporal James Tanner of Brooklyn, New York. It was a custom to appoint a disabled veteran to this position. Tanner could fully qualify in this one particular, for he had lost both legs in the Battle of Bull Run. His previous record had fitted him for the position he was now to occupy, so said his friends. He had worked as a clerk in the War Department in the New York Custom House, and had incidentally been a collector of taxes in Brooklyn. His political connections were also satisfactory. The New York Department of the Grand Army of the Republic had twice elected him commander. In addition he had been a member of the G. A. R. Pension Committee.³ All those desirous of pensions were gratified that Tanner was to represent them, for had not Tanner said in 1885,

²Edward A. Stanwood, A History of the Presidency from 1788 to 1897, p. 477.

³Donald L. McMurry, "The Bureau of Pensions During the Administration of President Harrison", Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XIII, 346. (Hereafter cited as McMurry, Bureau of Pensions).

I am one of those who believe that the men of the Union Armies wrote their title to the whole country in their hearts' blood and God knows they ought to own it if anybody does own it?

He further stated that he might "wring from the hearts of some, 'God help the surplus revenue in the United States Treasury', when I get at it."⁴

The critics of Tanner denounced him in no uncertain terms. They believed him unfit for the office and denounced him as a loud-mouthed Grand Army stump speaker. They insinuated that his military record was not one of which an honorable soldier would be proud. They also accused him of meddling in the affairs of the pension office while holding a position in New York. Perhaps the worst accusation was that of his intimate association with George E. Lemon, probably the worst and most influential of the Washington claim agents.⁵

The political attitude of the Republicans toward pensions, gave vent to a system of exploitation. The old soldiers exploited the north's generosity. They in turn were exploited by the pension attorneys. This caused the bill to go up steadily until 1889 it reached the high sum of \$92,000,000.⁶ This high cost can be easily explained by some of the most flagrant abuses.

⁴William Bayard Hale, "The Pension Carnival," World's Work, XXI, 13735.

⁵McMurry, Bureau of Pensions, p. 347.

⁶Annual Report of the Commissioner of Pensions 1930, p. 13.

In giving Tanner his instructions, President Harrison advised him to be "liberal with the boys" and he certainly carried out these instructions to the letter. His policy was to grant as many pensions as possible regardless of evidence and to increase the size of the pensions already payable. The interpretation of the law in regard to injuries contracted in service was expanded to the extent that nearly anyone could receive a pension. Besides expanding the evidence required for a pension he made four dollars the minimum rating for any disability.⁷

Probably one of the worst abuses in Tanner's reign was the so-called "special or forty-eight hour cases". One of the rules was to the effect that if a person was destitute or at the point of death, his claim would be considered and acted upon within two days. Ten cases were discovered in which the claimants had been rerated giving them first payment arrears which amounted to \$16,739. Tanner was called to task because these cases were all employees of the bureau.⁸

Another case which illustrates the corruption of his regime involved a high official. The Honorable Senator Manderson did not apply to have his pension rerated or asked for arrears but to his astonishment he

⁷McMurry, Bureau of Pensions, p. 352.

⁸Ibid., p. 352.

found that he had been re-rated and awarded the amount of \$4,300. Unlike most senators he possessed an old fashioned conscience and called for an examination to see if he were legally entitled to the money. On being informed that he was not, he refused the money.⁹

Congressman Cheadle in a personal investigation of the pension office unearthed some interesting facts. The employees were given to understand that their jobs would not be of lasting duration if their reports on cases were unfavorable. Medical evidence was not considered in making decisions. Cheadle found

forty-eight hour cases being rushed through for the benefit of Brooklyn and New York pensioners in general and a notorious pension attorney in particular.¹⁰

Tanner had attempted to fulfill his political promises and within six months had overshot the mark. Newspapers soon began a "hue and cry" for his removal. It was not long before the embarrassed Republican leaders succumbed to their demands.¹¹

Histories seldom speak of Tanner's successor--Green B. Raum--but his record was the blackest of the commissioners. General Raum was highly lauded by the newspapers, yet it was not long before he disappointed

⁹Ibid., p. 351.

¹⁰Ibid.,

¹¹Paxson, op. cit., p. 150.

both the newspapers and the general public.

Certain questionable practices caused an investigation by a House Committee of the 51st Congress. On June 8, 1890 Mr. Cooper of Indiana presented charges against the Commissioner of Pensions. This was referred to the Committee on Rules, and they reported the following charges against Raum. First, that the present Commissioner of Pensions has been engaged in selling to certain employees of the Pension office shares of stock in a corporation or company of which he is president, which is organized for the purpose of introducing a patent refrigerator which it is claimed is impracticable and worthless, and that in considering such purpose said employees are promoted in office; and second, that said Commissioner of Pensions has recently, by an unjust and partial ruling, advanced and caused to be taken up out of their order many thousands of the claims of a certain attorney residing in the City of Washington, and that in consideration thereof said attorney had become surety on the note of said Commissioner in a bank in the City of Washington for the sum of \$25, 000.¹²

The Committee on Rules recommended an investigation saying if the charges were true the office must be purged of fraud. The committee was composed of three Republicans

¹²House Report No. 3732, 51 Cong., 2 sess., p. 1.

and two Democrats. In looking over the reports we find that they were consistently partisan. The Republican majority reports as follows:

The committee, after a patient hearing of all the evidence and after a careful consideration of the same, have come to the conclusion that there is an entire failure to show the sale of any stock, or any offer to sell any stock, to an employee of the Pension Office. Nor has there been any promotion made or offered to be made in consideration of such purchase.

Also that there is an entire absence of any evidence showing or tending to show that by any unjust or partial ruling the commissioner has advanced or caused to be taken up out of their order many thousands or any claims of Mr. Lemon or any attorney, but that it appears clearly that the ruling or order referred to is just and impartial, and operates favorably in lessening the number of complaints received and increasing the number of claims finally allowed, and that no partiality or favoritism has been shown any attorney doing business before the office, and that the indorsements made by Mr. Lemon were not in consequence of the making of said ruling, and had no connection therewith. The Committee would therefore recommend the adoption of the following resolution:

Resolved, that the charges preferred against Honorable Green B. Raum as Commissioner of Pensions are entirely unsupported by the evidence given on the hearing of the same.

E. N. Morill--Chairman
Jno. G. Sawyer
Jas. P. Flick.¹³

The minority reports that the accusations were clearly established. A lengthy discussion is given in proving

¹³Ibid., p. 9.

their points. Afterwards it was recommended that he be removed. The affair was dormant for a short period of time. When the new Congress came in, it had a Democrat majority who saw to it that the affair was revived. The Committee again was partisan and he was condemned. The investigation is recorded on thousands of pages. I find in them much to condemn Raum.

General Raum organized the Universal Refrigerator Company. The Committee attempted to investigate the books but Raum refused to produce them. Upon testifying whether or not employees of the Bureau had been compelled to buy stock in the Company, Raum said that no one in the Pension Bureau owned any. Further developments show that there had been a Subsidiary Corporation formed--the Columbia Universal Refrigerator Company--by Raum, Bradley Tanner, an employee of the Pension Bureau, Raum's private secretary, and General Bussey, the assistant Secretary of the Interior.¹⁴ McMurtry, in the Mississippi Valley Historical Review says:

The Commissioner's lack of frankness, and his evident desire to avoid investigation raised a strong suspicion that he was engaged in speculative enterprises that would succeed better without too much publicity.¹⁵

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 221-225.

¹⁵McMurtry, Bureau of Pensions, pp. 358, 359.

In the next charge, that of improper relation with the notorious pension attorney--George E. Lemon--much is found which is not admirable. In July, 1889, Commissioner Raum was hunting for backing for his Refrigerator Company. He went to various banks to borrow money. Mr. J. W. Thompson, President of the National Metropolitan Bank, refused him the loan of the insignificant sum of \$500. The security was to be stock in the Refrigerator Company and a Gypsum Mining venture in Virginia. Raum tried to borrow \$12,000 from Lemon on October 21, on the same security, but the latter refused. The next significant happening was the appointment of Raum as Commissioner of Pensions. Lemon asked the Commissioner to make a change in the administration that would favor the Washington Claim attorneys but Raum refused since he thought that it was not the correct manner of running the office.¹⁶

On the 6th day of January, 1890, Order 151, allowing attorneys to certify their cases to completed files, was issued by the Commissioner, and on the 7th day of January, 1890, Lemon indorsed Raum's note at the Bank of the Republic in the sum of \$12,000. These orders were made at Lemon's request. The Commissioner overruled his former decision, and on the day Lemon indorsed his note in the sum of \$12,000. Time after time the Commissioner was questioned concerning this indorsement and each time he positively refused to give the Committee any information, claiming that it was his pri-

¹⁶House Report No. 1868, 52 Cong., 1 sess., pp. 22-24.

vate business purely and that the public had nothing to do with it.¹⁷

To prove that Lemon would be greatly benefitted by this order, we have but to read the testimony of Hoddson, a Pension Bureau employee.

Question: Did you notice what proportion of those cases (cases carried forward by order 151) as long as you handled them were Lemon's cases?

Answer: Up to a certain period he had a large majority. Take six weeks of that time and he had 5/7ths of them.¹⁸

The cases Lemon brought forward under this order totaled 8,100. The fees would have totaled approximately \$81,000.

We say that it is fair inference that this in-dorsement was made in consideration of official action on the part of the Commissioner favorable to George E. Lemon.¹⁹

Generally speaking when notorious politicians go into offices they create positions regardless of need, for their relatives. One month after Green B. Raum was in office, he made an order creating a division of the Bureau of Pensions known as the Appointment Division. Whom should he place at the head of this but his own son, Green B. Raum, Junior? He not only occupied this high position but was also Chief Clerk of the regular Pension Office.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 25.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 26.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 26.

McMurry says that it afterwards turned out to be a serious mistake.²⁰

Young Raum committed many political offenses from the insignificant one of using the Government's time to play pool and gamble on horses, to taking bribes and misappropriating funds. First, in the study of the case of William P. Smith, it is revealed that he advertised for a position in a prominent Washington newspaper. Strachan, the colored gentleman who answered the advertisement agreed with Smith to sell him a position in the Pension Office for \$200.00. In order to cover up the fact that half of the money went to young Raum, Strachan indorsed Raum's note for the sum of \$100.00. Strachan afterwards paid the note.²¹

Another suspicious case is that of Dr. Little. One of the surgeons on the Examining Board died. Dr. Little was appointed to succeed him. The day after his appointment Raum Junior asked for a loan of \$50.00, which was refused. One of the questions asked by the investigating committee and its answer is quite revealing:

Question: Was that the only money transaction between you and Green B. Raum Junior?

Answer: Well, that is all I have to say as to private matters.²²

²⁰McMurry, Bureau of Pensions, p. 361.

²¹House Report No. 1868, 52 Cong., 1 sess., pp. 3, 4.

²²Ibid., pp. 17, 18.

Besides selling offices there is a question mark about some other funds. An honest pensioner who had been paid \$72.00 in excess of his legal amount, returned the money. Young Raum took this money home and kept it there for some time until the newspapers demanded a clear account. Raum could offer no satisfactory explanation.²³

After hearing this testimony, the Secretary of the Interior immediately stated that the "prima facie" evidence against Raum Junior tended to show that he had taken money for the appointment and promotion of employees. He did not wait but immediately required Raum Junior's resignation.²⁴

If we think back for a moment to the Pension Bureau under the supervision of Colonel W. W. Dudley who used the Pension Office for a great political machine to perpetuate the Republican regime, it is found that his case is similar to that of Raum in dealing with Senator Cooper. The Honorable George W. Cooper from Indiana introduced and prosecuted an investigation of Raum as Commissioner of Pensions. Because of the disclosures this was distasteful to Raum. He therefore tried to beat Cooper in the next election. J. G. Dunbar, Cooper's opponent, was given the privileges of the Pension Office which

²³Ibid., p. 5.

²⁴McMurry, Bureau of Pensions, p. 361; House Report No. 1868, 52 Cong., 1 sess., p. 4.

would win him many veteran votes in the election. This was a concise prostitution for political purposes of governmental office.²⁵

Unfortunately the scandals were not all confined to the larger political officials, but their lesser brothers appear to have followed in the former's footsteps. In the case of Mrs. Wright it was hinted that some of the chiefs paid improper attention to the women clerks. In this particular case, it was alleged that a Mr. Ford asked Mrs. Wright to walk down a dark, lonesome road, and that she understood his veiled meaning.²⁶

For a critique of the Pension Office under Harrison's administration, we have but to look at a speech by President Elliot of Harvard:

I hold it to be a hideous wrong inflicted upon the Republic that the Pension System instituted for the benefit of the soldiers and sailors of the United States has been prostituted and degraded by the whole series of Republican administrations. As things are, Gentlemen, one cannot tell whether a pensioner of the United States received an honorable wound in battle or contracted a chronic catarrh twenty years after the war. One cannot tell whether a pensioner of the United States is a disabled soldier or sailor or a perjured pauper who has fostered himself upon the public treasury. I say that to put the pension system of the United States into this condition is a crime against all honest soldiers and against

²⁵Ibid., p. 361; House Report No. 1868, 52 Cong., 1 sess., p. 32.

²⁶House Report No. 1868, 52 Cong., 1 sess., p. 15.

Republican institutions; and it is a Republican administration which has brought that system to this condition, the present administration, being the worst of all. . . . Gentlemen, if I had no other motive for changing my party, I would do everything in my power by word and act to get the chance to vote again for Grover Cleveland for President, because he bravely did what he could to restore the pension system of our country to the honorable respect of its soldiers and citizens.²⁷

²⁷McMurry, Bureau of Pensions, pp. 34, 35.

CHAPTER III
FRAUDS
(INDIVIDUAL CASES)

In the first chapter, the origin of pensions was traced through the English and American systems up to Harrison's administration. Two of the most notorious pension commissioners were discussed in the second chapter. In this study, it is found that fraud in individual cases permeates the whole pension system. Some of the presidents and pension commissioners have "whitewashed" the corruptness of the system. Others have fought to make the pension list a roll of honor. In looking over the names, one cannot tell whether a person was a deserving hero who helped to preserve the Union, a camp gambler, follower and marauder or an idiotic son born a generation after the war was over.

The individual fraud cases may be roughly divided into seven different classes:

1. Cases where one man has drawn several pensions.
2. Cases where deserters are receiving pay equal to those who served to the close of the war.
3. Cases where "bounty jumpers" have been given double pensions.
4. Cases where men without military records have

been given an enlistment and an honorable discharge.

5. Cases giving compensation for ills not connected with army service.

6. Cases of widows never married to soldiers, drawing pensions as legal widows.

7. Cases where girls born long after the war who married veterans for the sake of their pensions.¹

The first portion of this chapter will take up the private pension bills of which Congress has passed thousands. When a person was not eligible to receive a pension through the bureau or found that his claim had been rejected, he immediately made contact with his representative or senator. To please the applicant, the official would introduce a private bill placing the aspiring pensioner on the roll. These bills were passed without discussion. To prove the injustice of these, the writer will cite some cases picked at random from various sources. Although only a few will be discussed, thousands can be found. Paxson says of this abuse:

The private pension bill was a greater abuse than the general legislation because in hundreds of cases, individuals not entitled to pensions by any general rule obtained the friendly intervention of their Congressman to secure the favor by special legislation. The private bills included cases of deserters with the effrontery to seek aid from the coun-

¹William Baynard Hale, "The Pension Carnival," World's Work, XXI, 13491.

try they had betrayed; and trumped up cases where the evidence frequently showed why the pension should not be granted.²

For the sake of clarity, let us now discuss briefly a few of the individual cases according to the seven types previously stated.

The case of Mr. Prince is a revealing one. He was a respectful citizen of Maine. He was discovered and convicted of drawing seven fictitious widows' pensions. The smallest one in point of finance, was that of a Captain's widow. The others ranged from \$25. to \$30. monthly. He had defrauded the government of over \$20,000, before he was discovered.³

The next case is a famous one mentioned by President Cleveland in vetoing it. The person under fire was James E. O'Shea, who declared that he was eligible because of a saber wound in the head and a gunshot wound in his left leg. It seems that when his record was examined that there was no definite disability, and moreover he had served two additional years after his supposed wounds had incapacitated him. Instead of honorary merits, the committee found that in 1864, this particular person was found guilty of desertion and as a result was sentenced "to forfeit all pay and allowances for the time he was absent." In attempting to prove O'Shea had been wounded, the Ad-

²Paxson, op. cit., p. 98.

³House Report No. 387, 46 Cong., 3 sess., pp. 60, 61.

jutant General's report shows that the soldier was in a position to be wounded. Cleveland took the following stand:

The fact of his situation being such as to render him liable to receive a wound is hardly sufficient to establish his right to a soldier's pension, which is only justified by injuries actually received and affirmatively proved.⁴

The second case of desertion was that of a private pension bill passed by the 65th Congress in the second session. September 21, 1864, John Oates, Private Company D, 14th Regiment, United States Infantry was taken from confinement to his regimental headquarters. He had been imprisoned on the dry Tortugas, where he had been indelibly marked on the left hip with the letter "D" for desertion. He was brought into camp with a twenty-five pound ball attached to his leg by chains. He had just finished the sentence of a deserter, serving one and one half years. Before he was drummed out of camp in accordance with the sentence of court martial, his hair was cut, and his head shaved. Thus disgracing his country and himself, we cannot see how this man was worthy to receive a pension, but surprisingly it is found that Congress passed this bill:

That in the administration of the pension laws, John Oates shall hereafter be held and considered to have been honorably dis-

⁴Richardson, op. cit., VIII, 428.

charged from the military service of the United States.⁵

A third case of desertion is one that strikes near home. This particular applicant applied for a pension from Tulsa, Oklahoma. Platoff Bush was a private of Co. A, First Indiana Cavalry. While on furlough, on the third day of August 1863, in Washington, he engaged in a fight with Private Abraham Shank of Co. K, First Maryland Cavalry. Platoff did not believe in intimate hand to hand combat, so he decided to try his ability and skill in throwing bricks. His aim was good, so that Mr. Shank died as a result of the blows. A court martial resulted and Platoff was convicted of manslaughter. He served two years in the Albany penitentiary. A few years ago he turned up in Tulsa. A number of prominent Tulsa people, two ex-mayors, the president of a bank, the vice-presidents of three banks, and the prominent members of the Grand army Post signed a petition to the Committee on military affairs to correct Bush's desertion record, and to direct the Secretary of War to issue him an honorable discharge. This bill was introduced into Congress by a member from Oklahoma--Charles E. Creagor. This particular bill passed the House but was eliminated by the Senate.⁶

⁵United States Statutes at Large, XXXVI, Part II, 1598; Hale, op. cit., pp. 14158-9.

⁶Congressional Record, 61 Cong., 1 sess., XXXIV, 252; Hale, op. cit., p. 14611.

These men were dishonorably discharged from the United States army. What right does Congress have to go back years and manufacture and change history? There is occasionally a pretense that the expurging of a shameful wrong is desired for the sake of a wife and children; but it is singular that such solicitude should have awakened at so late a day. The inference is easily drawn, in that his record has been supposedly corrected because of the pension that he would get.

The next type of case was that of the so-called "bounty jumper". A bounty would be paid for enlistment so that some unprincipled soldiers would desert after a short time, and begin again with an additional bounty. William Doherty did not serve two months after his enlistment as a private of Co. B, 14th New York State Militia until he deserted on July 24, 1861. He had enlisted for three years or for the duration of the war. A year later he was mustered into Co. A, 163rd New York Volunteers Infantry as William Thompson. He was discharged June 29, 1865 under his real name--William Doherty. The House Committee recommended to the 61st Congress that Doherty

shall hereafter be considered to have been honorably discharged from military service of the United States on the date he absconded from Co. B, 14th New York State Militia.⁷

⁷United States Statutes at Large, XXXVI, Part II, 1919; Hale, op. cit., p. 14162.

In a case where compensation was wanted for disability or rather death not caused by military service, one can cite that of Wilbur H. Eldridge. He was pensioned at \$2. a month for a slight wound in the calf of the leg. The ball passed "rather superficially through the muscles". The examination showed no lameness. In 1881 while working on a building he missed his step and fell backwards. His skull was crushed, causing his death. Cleveland in returning the bill said:

Without a particle of proof and with no fact established which connects the fatal accident in the remotest degree with the wound referred to, it is proposed to grant a pension of \$12. a month to the widow.⁸

Another interesting case of a private pension bill that was passed by Congress and vetoed by Cleveland, is the one of a widow who claimed that her husband had committed suicide because of chronic diarrhea and general debility contracted in the military service. The pension had at one time been granted by the pension bureau, but a special examination in 1885 proved that the deceased soldier was affected with epilepsy and had been since childhood. After a severe attack while in a despondent mood, the veteran had committed suicide. Cleveland, in return-

⁸Richardson, op. cit., VIII, 424, 425.

ing the bill, sarcastically remarked that the death of the claimant's husband was not remotely connected with the service and that the decision of the pension bureau should stand.⁹

In another case, it is clear that the soldier is producing ills so that he may draw a pension. Mr. M. Romahn filed his claim in the pension bureau in 1882, alleging that in the winter of 1862, from being put on duty--standing guard excessively--he had become affected with varicose veins. His application was rejected on the ground that no record of his disability appeared. The latter claim made to Congress for relief was the same as that made to the pension bureau, with the allegation added that in May, 1865 his breast and shoulder were injured by a railroad accident while he was on detailed duty. Cleveland says,

If the latter described injury really exists, it is exceedingly strange that it found no place in his claim before the pension bureau, while the account given of the cause of his alleged varicose veins must surprise those who are at all familiar with the character of that difficulty and the routine of army service.¹⁰

Some of the other causes why a soldier should receive a pension, are interesting. Richard Ayres, a good soldier of the Union army, participated in some danger-

⁹Ibid., p. 426.

¹⁰Richardson, op. cit., p. 427.

ous work for the government. In applying to Congress for a pension he claims that he was injured in his left hip while engaged in a battle at Dog's Gap. The investigating officers proved that he was not injured in the army; but his disability was the result of a fall he received when a small boy.¹¹

James C. Chandler wanted a pension and if one cause were not good enough then he tried another. He first claimed that he was disabled by being run over by an army supply wagon. His ankle was injured enough to incapacitate him for life. The investigators found no proof of this and his medical examination did not show that his ankle was hurt. He next applied because of "rheumatism and disease of the back in the region of the kidneys." Lack of proof caused another rejection. But not despairing, Chandler had his senator introduce a private bill placing him on the pension roll. This was passed by the House and the Senate but was vetoed by the president.¹²

John D. Ham produced a new "one" on the bureau when he claimed that they should pension him because he intended to join the army. He alleged that he was on his way to join a regiment when his horse unfortunately, slipped. Ham was pinned underneath thus fracturing his ankle. The

¹¹Ibid., p. 425.

¹²Ibid.

logical House of Representatives and the Senate of the United States with their keen intellect, saw the distant connection. The bill was passed. The president, unfortunately, could not follow Congresses' reasoning and vetoed the pension.¹³

In transporting troops, they must cross rivers and if there were no bridges it was necessary to use a ferry. John I. Williams, who was never in the military service, while transporting United States troops across a river on his ferry, dislocated his shoulder. Congress investigated the details and placed William's name before the president to be put on the pension rolls. The president vetoed the bill.¹⁴

Evidently the food given the soldiers was not all that it should be. Thomas S. Hopkins applied for a pension giving as the cause "chronic diarrhea".¹⁵

Congress did abuse the passing of private pension bills, for in some of the different sessions it passed the following:

46th Session	1879-1881	96
47th "	1881-1883	216
48th "	1883-1885	598
49th "	1885-1887	856
50th "	1887-1889	1,015

¹³Ibid., p. 245.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 246.

¹⁵Ibid.

51st Session	1889-1891	1,386
52nd "	1891-1893	217
53rd "	1893-1895	119. ¹⁶

The private pension bill was a fraud, generally speaking, from beginning to end. In turning from the Bill to the claims filed and granted in the pension bureau, we find that fraud was again a very serious problem. The office force was unable to make a careful examination of the affidavits in the thousands upon thousands of claims that were annually filed. The pension attorneys realized this and incidentally took advantage of it. All sorts of doubtful claims were filed in hopes that they would be passed, which they were. Lincoln in speaking of the pension rolls, claimed that there was reason to believe that many who were then on the pension list and in receipt of the bounty of the government were in the ranks of the insurgent army or giving them aid or comfort.¹⁷

In 1874 special agents of the bureau made an investigation of 1,263 claims. They discovered that in those cases in which pensions had been granted, nearly forty per cent or 411 cases proved to be fraudulent. As a result of this investigation, twenty persons were indicted, thirteen convicted and the rest acquitted.¹⁸

¹⁶Hale, op. cit., p. 387.

¹⁷Richardson, op. cit., VI, 52.

¹⁸Oliver, op. cit., pp. 40, 41.

in 1875, Commissioner Atkinson said,

the development of frauds of every character in pension claims has assumed such a magnitude as to require the serious attention of Congress . . . By actual test in cases taken from the files of this office it is shown that a large percentage of the affidavits filed in support of claims for pensions are signed and sworn to without being read over to affiants, and without their having a full and proper knowledge of the contents.¹⁹

Between 1876-1879, there were 5,131 claims investigated, and of this number 1,425 were dropped from the roll because of fraud.²⁰

Chester A. Arthur in 1881 in one of his messages, spoke of the great temptation to present fictitious claims because the average sum obtained upon such application was \$1300. This led him to suggest a special appropriation for the prevention of fraud.²¹

The records in the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Library, Stillwater, Oklahoma, do not go into minute details to find more than a few typical cases; but these are adequate to show the magnanimity of the frauds.

James Cunningham undertaker of 158 Duffield Street, Brooklyn when war began tried to enlist but his father would not let him. When the 14th volunteers went south he followed but was taken back by his father. He finally got away and became a camp follower of Co. D, 106th Vol-

¹⁹Ibid., p. 41.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Richardson, op. cit., VIII, 59.

unteers. He came home in 1865 with many stories and became a hero. Later he was a big man in the G. A. R. A comrade one day asked to see his discharge but he claimed he had lost it, so they insisted that he get a new one. On June 26, 1896 Cunningham executed and filed in the War Department an affidavit declaring that he had enlisted with Co. D of the 106th New York Volunteers, on August 11, 1862, was wounded at Cold Harbor in 1864. His G. A. R. friend vouched for him. He claimed he had fought under the name Edwin Walker because of his father's opposition, and of his own age. Supposedly, he received his discharge eight years later. Then he applied for a pension. It all looked regular enough, however, the real Edwin Walker was living at the same time at Richville Street, Lawrence County, New York; and was at the same time drawing his pension for the same service. The government for a full year paid both pensions until a letter miscarried and exposed the fraud. Cunningham confessed and was sentenced to a year in the Nassau County jail at Mineola Long Island.²²

Probably some of the worst cases of fraud were those of widows of which certificate No. 237,678 is representative. The negro soldier died in the service on January 27, 1864. On February 23, 1887, twenty-three years after

²²Hale, op. cit., p. 13493.

his death, his wodon filed a claim for a pension, alleging marriage to him while in slavery, by a customary ceremony. Proof was submitted tending to show the fact of their marriage and their continuous cohabitation and recognition as man and wife up to the date of his enlistment. She was given a pension as his widow, October 15, 1887 and arrears of pay amounting to \$2,352. After receiving over \$4000 she admitted that she was never married to the soldier.²³

The case of Matilda Gribord is even worse than the one given above. A blind drunken beggar by the name of Francois Delair asked Matilda to go with him. They wandered begging with a dog and a tin cup through Canada. Edward Delair, a son, looked up the matter of his father's pension. He had served in Co. I, 18th Illinois Volunteers Infantry. He attributed his blindness to the exposure and sudden changes of heat while in the service. He had put in an application for a pension, but again the wanderlust hit the beggar and his woman so they left for Montreal. "Here at the end of a prolonged spree, it was clear that Francois was at his journey's end." He was overtaken by a stroke of paralysis. Refuge was found for the couple in the house of a Mrs. Lobille. Delair's son had impressed it upon the woman that she ought to get

²³Oliver, op. cit., p. 90.

Delair to marry her. On the 30th of August, a priest --Father Wilfred Hebert--performed the marriage ceremony. The old man, who was eighty-nine years old was propped up with pillows and unable to say more than his assent when the priest asked the ceremonial questions. Louis Larch says in a document signed with a cross, that Delair was not drunk. Matilda Delair, however, needed no longer wander, begging with a tin cup. She was the widow of a veteran of the Civil War. True, she spoke no English and had never been out of French Canada. True, she had married the veteran only four days before his death, twenty-two years after the war in which he was a mercenary. Then, too, the veteran had had another wife during the war, and no evidence of her death was obtainable. It was true also that the newly made widow had babbled of a previous marriage of her own. True it was, too, that she had married the last husband when he was old, paralyzed, half conscious, and on his death bed. It would be difficult to persuade anybody but the United States Government of the legality of a marriage performed under such circumstances. But the United States justly grateful to the preservers of the Union, allows no doubtful circumstances to stand in the way of doing justice to them and their widows.²⁴ The certificate number was 420,157. The compensation from a grateful nation amounted

²⁴Hale, op. cit., p. 13918.

to \$12,648.

Certificate No. 33,833 is a case of matrimonial insurance. This soldier was killed in action in 1862. The pension was given to his wife from the date of his death until August 26, 1870 when she remarried. She appeared again on February 20, 1890, thirty-one years after her husband's death and twenty-three years after her remarriage, and filed a claim for the restoration of her pension. She had lived with her second husband for nearly six years when she discovered that he had a wife and children still living. This made her marriage illegal so she procured a decree annulling her marriage. She was paid an arrearage of \$2,700.²⁵

In the next case, the soldier died in the service fighting for his country. He left a dependent mother; but there was no record of his marriage. The mother applied and was granted a pension as a dependent. After the mother died, a woman who pretended that she was the widow of the soldier filed a claim. Her claim was established by witnesses who testified under oath that they were present at the marriage of the soldier and the claimant. The widow admitted that she knew the mother to be drawing a pension as a dependent parent. Commissioner Evans says of this case:

²⁵Oliver, op. cit., p. 88.

The government has no case--the mother was wrongly pensioned--the alleged widow has established her case, and your commissioner is powerless though he believes the case to be fraudulent.²⁶

The above incidents are but a few of many cases.

For a modern version of the pension, there is the extract from The Daily Oklahoman, Saturday May 6, 1933.

The pen (Governor Murray's) is not aware of the fact that by its stroke, it turns not only a number of aged men who fought to preserve the Union, but the widows of Union soldiers, without pensions and without families, who in the late evening of their lives, have nowhere else to go. The Governor, however, knows all about that. He knows that a number of penniless old women, who happened to marry Union soldiers instead of Confederates and who must take the consequences for that now, will have to fare forth, the only direction they can take being 'Over the hill to the poor house.'²⁷

These old Union soldiers and Union soldier widows are drawing pensions of \$30. to \$100. from the Federal Government. Only three will be without pensions and these three did not serve in the Union army. The average pension drawn by these inmates of the Oklahoma Union Soldiers' Home is approximately \$80. A characteristic case of the old soldiers in the Home is that of John Turner, a negro who fought in the Civil War. While on his seasonal wanderings he was employed by the Honorable Claude Weaver, Secretary to the Governor of the State of Oklahoma. Weaver applied for and received a pension for Turner from the

²⁶Annual Report of the Commissioners of Pensions 1901; Oliver, op. cit., p. 88.

²⁷The Daily Oklahoman, May 6, 1933, p. 8.

Federal Government to the amount of \$50. per month. The negro would make the soldiers home his abode during the winter; but in the summer time the wandering instinct of his race would crop out and he would hie himself to parts unknown. While staying in the home Turner drew his pension of \$50. a month.²⁸ One cannot see why the State of Oklahoma should keep the Union soldiers while they are drawing a fairly decent pension from the Federal Government. Also that being 68 years after the war and considering the evidence given, one wonders how remote their connection was with the Civil War.

²⁸Statement by Claude Weaver.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Pensions were instituted in the English speaking nations by "Good Queens Bess". They were transplanted to American soil before the Revolution. The Continental Congress promised pensions to the loyal Revolution soldiers. The acts passed gave leeway to frauds even at this early date. Frauds were more or less troublesome all through the Revolutionary Pension System. The administration of the pension system was changed into a Bureau, in the Department of Interior in 1848 in an endeavor to make it more efficient.

At the call for volunteers for action against the Confederates, Congress promised adequate pension legislation. This promise was certainly fulfilled. For a year after the cessation of the war the United States was paying approximately \$15,000,000 for disabled soldiers and their widows. During the period of natural increase until 1874, the bill became \$31,000,000. A period of decline put the bill at \$28,000,000. But now we come to a period of undue stimulation due to the pension attorneys, the veterans, and the tariff forces. The arrears act passed in 1878, tempted thousands to defraud the Government. The pension bureau fell into the

hands of the professional pension promoters. We now find that the system was "honey combed" with fraud of all kinds. All of the presidents recognized this. Some tried sincerely to appoint good commissioners and better the system; others merely "white-washed" and attempted to cover up the crookedness. Campaign pledges made in order to get the old soldier vote, caused an enormous increase in the pension roll and a proportionate increase in fraud.

The Grand Army of the Republic first started as a patriotic order, but was soon taken over by the crooked pension attorneys. It was used as a machine to control the veteran votes, so that the treasury would be opened to the pension attorneys.

The different pension commissioners acting in their own individual ways, had much influence on the policy. W. W. Dudley was after votes for the Republican Party. Bently tried to clean the house. Tanner carried out the campaign pledges of the Republican Party. He was probably honest, but was a fanatic on his hobby--pensions. Raum, from all the evidence was not only misled on his policy but dishonest as well.

The private pension bills were even worse than the pension bureau. When an applicant could not prove his

claim with the bureau, he would have Congress pension him. The making of Military History (supposed correction of Military records) was a disgrace to our Congresses.

In thinking of the corruption in the Civil War pension system along with the enormous waste, one cannot but hope that our bonus system for the World's War veterans turns out better.

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The Daily Oklahoman, May 6, 1933.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

Statement by Claude Weaver, Secretary to the Governor of the State of Oklahoma.

This thesis was typed by Roy Bondurant.

McMurry says that it afterwards turned out to be a serious mistake.²⁰ Young Raum committed many political offenses from the insignificant one of using the Government's time to play pool and gamble on horses, to taking bribes and misappropriating funds. First, in the study of the case of William P. Smith, it is revealed that he advertised for a position in a prominent Washington newspaper. Strachan, the colored gentleman who answered the advertisement agreed with Smith to sell him a position in the Pension Office for \$200.00. In order to cover up the fact that half of the money went to young Raum, Strachan indorsed Raum's note for the sum of \$100.00. Strachan afterwards paid the note,²¹ back for a moment to the Pension Bureau under another suspicious case is that of Dr. Little. One of the surgeons on the Examining Board died. Dr. Little was appointed to succeed him. The day after his appointment Raum Junior asked for a loan of \$50.00, which was refused. One of the questions asked by the investigating committee and its answer is quite revealing:

Question: Was that the only money transaction between you and Green B. Raum Junior?

Answer: Well, that is all I have to say as to private matters.²²

²⁰McMurry, Bureau of Pensions, p. 361.

²¹House Report No. 1868, 52 Cong., 1 sess., pp. 3, 4.

²²Ibid., pp. 17, 18.

²³McMurry, Bureau of Pensions, p. 361; House Report No. 1868, 52 Cong., 1 sess., p. 4.

ous work for the government. In applying to Congress for a pension he claims that he was injured in his left hip while engaged in a battle at Dog's Gap. The investigating officers proved that he was not injured in the army; but his disability was the result of a fall he received when a small boy.¹¹

James C. Chandler wanted a pension and if one cause were not good enough then he tried another. He first claimed that he was disabled by being run over by an army supply wagon. His ankle was injured enough to incapacitate him for life. The investigators found no proof of this and his medical examination did not show that his ankle was hurt. He next applied because of "rheumatism and disease of the back in the region of the kidneys." Lack of proof caused another rejection. But not despairing, Chandler had his senator introduce a private bill placing him on the pension roll. This was passed by the House and the Senate but was vetoed by the president.¹²

John D. Ham produced a new "one" on the bureau when he claimed that they should pension him because he intended to join the army. He alleged that he was on his way to join a regiment when his horse unfortunately, slipped. Ham was pinned underneath thus fracturing his ankle. The

¹¹Ibid., p.425.
¹²Ibid.